

Hamlet Committee Meeting Minutes

**Meeting #2 held at The Mt. Washington House
January 13, 2008**

Attendees:

Allen Nahmen
Joan Wallstein
Scot Cohen
Laurie Laverack
Tony Avenia
Kelly Fox
Howard Van Lenten
Tom Carty
Robina Ward
Ira Madris
David Ruede

1. Mission Statement – we reviewed the draft and agreed to various changes. As of writing these notes, Howard has made the changes and these were distributed to the group.
2. Hamlet Planner
 - Understand there is \$8K in the town budget for the hiring of a planner. This is far short of what we expect the cost to be.
 - Someone asked if it made sense to use the same planner as will be used for the new park, or solicit from the same companies they are exploring. It is necessary to keep the scopes separate, as the state requires specific funding and controls for the Park Planning. Granted there may be some collaboration at some point, but in general these will be two different pursuits and we are only working on the Hamlet.
 - David has made telephone contact with a number of planners, gathering information and some understanding of their experience and capabilities. The firms include: The LA Group, BFJ Planning, Saratoga Associates, Envirovisions Collaborative, The Planning Partnership, AKRF- Hudson Valley Office.
 - Our goal is to recommend a Hamlet Planner to the Town Board by the beginning of April. The steps to get there are as follows: 1) draft an RFP that would include a scope of work/priorities; 2) submit for review and approval to Art, the Town Board and the Planning Board; 3) simultaneously meet with various planners at their offices and/or walkthrough of town to share information and just learn more; 4) send out RFP; 5) receive proposals; 6) analyze; 7) submit recommendation.
 - This is an aggressive schedule, yet we all understand the crucial need to get someone on board. It is achievable, if we focus and work collaboratively.

- Once we have a proposal, we are in a better position to seek grants for the hiring of the Hamlet Planner. We will have the support documentation to better explain what we need and are trying to accomplish and give our application a strong showing.
3. Fundraising and the Hillsdale Economic and Development Corporation – Understand it is possible for our committee to be able to set-up an account for tax-free donations that would become a line-item in this not-for-profit. David to request Art to set up two accounts: one for Hamlet Beautification and the other for Hamlet Planning. The town accountant, Mark Fitzgerald, may also be of help.
 4. Grants
 - Robina agreed to spearhead all grants. (this is a huge undertaking and is much appreciatedthanks Robina!)
 - Robina to reach out to Main Street Grant, which has a deadline of March 25th to see if we comply
 - Fiskers – Project Orange Thumb, deadline 2/15/08. Tom, Robina to work on this. Very tight timeframe but worth a try if we can get a concept together quickly.
 - Robina to research how neighboring towns have funded their Town Planners
 - Robina identified two grants that might be ideal for funding the Hamlet Planner. 1)NYS Council of the Arts (no deadline); 2)Hudson River Greenway
 - Robina to develop a spreadsheet with basic facts for the various grant opportunities
 5. Pay Pal – logistically, very complicated and costly. Not something we will pursue.
 6. Fundraising for Barrel Planting
 - Agreed that we will be more successful doing active fundraising, rather than the passive “donation cans on the counter” routine.
 - Meaning....we will volunteer our time, and encourage others to join us, as we stand in front of various businesses and ask for a contribution. We chose Saturday, March 22nd, This should be a busy holiday weekend, and hopefully, Spring will be in the air.
 - Allen is going to explore the ability and cost of hanging baskets.
 7. Entry Signs – Peter has asked our group to take over the maintenance and any additional plantings. If we raise enough funds over March 22nd, we can use for this effort. We will need volunteers to help with watering and weeding throughout the summer.
 8. Sewer Project – reviewed Augie’s update.

9. Existing Library Building – we would like to see this become the new Town Hall. Understand there is a lot of competing interest at this time, yet we hope and support any action in that direction. We understand there is an Historic Preservation Grant available to assist municipalities in changing an historic structure over to municipal use.
10. Ira and Robina to share lists and develop one list for future email blast
11. Tony and Kelly to distribute list of business owners and contact information. They thought this would be a great way to ease communication amongst themselves and to keep each other advised on business related issues.
12. We reviewed photos of some examples of “business directional signage” for placement. David noted Valatia has a great example of a town directory sign and will get a photo for our next meeting. Although this is something the Hamlet Planner could help us with, many do not want to wait and would like proceed with getting signage up for the businesses. We all agreed that this type of signage is much nicer than the “blue state signage”. Tony, Scott and Kelly to make a recommendation where these would be located.
13. Communication
 - Robina will post our monthly meeting minutes on the TB website.
 - The Independent requires a 2 wk notice in writing on any listing for the Community Events Calendar.
14. Poster
 - Ira and Alen to work on a poster for our group
15. Next meeting is February 10th at 9am, Mt. Washington House.

Kelly, thanks again for hosting us.